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HD 170 .C46 1995 no.7

The Bureau of Land Management Service Center Newsletter July 1995

CENTER SCENE

Two Centers Approved for Takeoff!

June 19 was a day to celebrate for the National Applied Resource Sciences Center (NARSC) and the National Human Resources Management Center (NHRMC)! At an hour-long BLM Corporate Team meeting, both NARSC and NHRMC were given the final approval needed to commence operations.

In addition, the fledgling National Business Systems Center (NBSC) was given the go-ahead to continue their preparations. If all goes according to plan, the NBSC will be given final approval at the Executive Leadership Team meeting in Montana in late July.

The BLM Corporate Team consists of the BLM Director, the Deputy Director, the four Assistant Directors, and the Eastern States Director, who represents BLM's State and Center Directors. This high-level management team, which is the top policy- and decision-making entity in the Bureau, meets every Monday afternoon for 3 hours to discuss Bureau business.

The new NHRMC organization contributes to the accomplishment of the Bureau's resource management mission by providing expert human resources advice, guidance, and operational support. It accomplishes this by providing a variety of services to a range of clients both here in Denver and across the country.

One key role is to provide human resources consultation and information to the field. In addition, any employee or job applicant can call to receive information.

Another key role is strategic assessment. Position management, employment/staffing, work force profiles, automation tasks, and succession planning are all issues that can be analyzed by experts in a variety of fields.

NHRMC can also help the Bureau by developing or modifying human resource management systems to make them simple, responsive, flexible, needs-oriented, and cost-effective. And the Center manages the Bureau's award/suggestion program, ethics program, Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Plan program, Hispanic Coalition MOU, and Resource Apprenticeship Program for Students (RAPS).

Finally, NHRMC continues to provide operational support for all of us in the new centers here in Denver and the Office of IRM/Modernization.

NARSC is finally ready to leave the runway after almost a year of planning and preparation, most of it involving employees working in teams to shape the new organization.

NARSC is committed to meeting the needs of customers throughout the Bureau and will be responsive to evolving customer requirements. The new Center's focus is to provide scarce skills and specialized equipment that augment the work of field offices. The Center also helps to bring skills together and serves as a link between policy and operations.

Five administrative groups have been set up: resource analysis and assessment, architecture and engineering, information and communication, geographic sciences, and natural resource sciences. These five groups closely parallel the Center's five primary roles: scientific and technical consulting, information exchange, production, analysis and assessment, and systems.

One of the most innovative aspects of the new Center is the creation of three laboratories. The Geographic Information lab will unite the remote sensing, photogrammetry, cartography, and resource disciplines in a common setting for the sharing of equipment, techniques, and knowledge. A Facilities, Planning, Designing, and Engineering lab will unite related disciplines in a joint venture to meet customers' needs.

An Information and Communication lab will bring the technology transfer, library, and micrographics functions together in a synergistic blend. Other labs may also be established as needs become apparent.

The guiding principles of NARSC revolve around providing products and services, fostering scientific and technological excellence, being flexible and responsive, and using interdisciplinary teams, partnerships, and collaborative approaches. Good communication and interaction both internally and externally will be emphasized.

While not yet formally approved, NBSC employees are hard at work shaping their new organization. An implementation team is facilitating communication and coordinating reorganization activities, including the work of six subteams: two for human resource management concerns; one for workspace and logistics issues; one to address funding matters; a VALUE team; and one to put everything together for the final transition to the new Center.

VALUE is an acronym for Value-Added Learning and Utilization of Employees. The VALUE team will seek the full utilization of employees of the Business Center and will promote skill development to add value to the Center's products and services. The team is hard at work identifying both current and needed skills as well as employee interests. The team will then come up with a policy and process to promote the VALUE mission.

The NBSC briefing to the Corporate Team was presented by two members of the Implementation Team — Julie O'Neill and Ron Corsi. Julie and Ron presented a status report on the reorganization, highlighted key milestones, and described what is needed in terms of Corporate Team support to successfully establish the new Center.

If all goes well, in about 6 weeks it will be NBSC's turn to celebrate. In the meantime, congratulations to NARSC and NHRMC on their official launching!

—Safety: Emphasizing Behavior—

Safety in BLM, and in many other organizations as well, has frequently involved a "program of the month" approach. While these programs sometimes produce short-term results, the benefits typically taper off when the program ends.

Now the Bureau is ready to try a new approach . . . a *behavior-based* approach designed to be a long-term process rather than a quick-fix effort. The goal is continuous safety improvement over the long haul.

Since every culture is different, the principles of accident prevention must be adapted to the environment in which they will be used. Behavior-based safety allows a program to be custom-tailored to the unique culture and characteristics of each individual work environment, be it a BLM warehouse in central Nevada or a State Office in a large city.

Behavior-based safety depends on employee commitment and participation. The central idea is that accidents are preventable and are caused by unsafe behaviors and incorrect processes or procedures. The trick is to identify those behaviors that are critical, i.e., that can increase the likelihood of an accident occurring.

Once a behavior is singled out, and employees play a key role in identifying behaviors and hazards, the factors that trigger unsafe behaviors can be identified and hopefully eliminated. This approach, over time, should reduce injuries and property damage.

One key element of the behavior-based approach is an assessment that looks at the tasks, behaviors, and culture of each facility on an individual basis. Because the approach is ongoing, it can change emphasis as the safety culture demands, resulting in a flexible program that is always in tune with the realities of root causes of accidents.

A BLM behavior-based safety survey asks tough, down-to-earth questions. "Have you ever been asked to perform any operations that you thought were unsafe?" "Are risks sometimes overlooked to get the job done?" "Is safe behavior recognized by your facility?" "Are supervisors more concerned about their safety record than accident prevention?"

The behavior-based safety process is ultimately designed to produce an injury-free workplace. Its three primary objectives are to ensure that safety efforts are proactive rather than reactive, to use behavioral observation and feedback to determine problem areas and make improvements, and to identify and remove barriers that obstruct safe behavior.

Behavior-based safety is one of three major safety initiatives in the Bureau. The new safety strategic plan, which emphasizes employee empowerment and field office participation, is another major initiative that is key to the reinvention and reengineering of BLM's safety program. The third initiative involves cost containment of Workers' Compensation claims to manage costs and to get people who have been injured back to work and leading productive lives as soon as possible.

If all goes according to plan, the behavior-based safety program will be approved over the summer and will then be tested at one or two pilot sites, including perhaps the Service Center, early in the new fiscal year. Phased implementation will then begin across the rest of the Bureau.

Personnel News

New Employees:

Joy Weyna-Smith, Voucher Examiner, SC-616
Cindi Steinheimer, Empl. Relations Spec., SC-632
Kevin Fuell, Info. Receptionist, SC-616
Daniel Shultz, File Clerk (OA), SC-616
Georgiann Fargo, Voucher Examiner, SC-616

Separations:

Dimitri Atkins, Computer Spec., DW-101

Employee Awards

SC and DW employees approved for awards between May 16 and June 15

Special Act Awards

Lorna Dick DW-101
Terry Reed DW-101
Michael Peeler DW-105